

REMARKS

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the courtesy extended to Applicant's representative, Mr. Lawrence T. Cullen and Ms. Keiko Okitsu, during an interview on February 5, 2004.

Applicants presented draft amendments to the claims to the Examiner during the interview which are substantially similar to the above claims with amendments discussed during the interview. During the interview, Applicant asserted that neither U.S. Patent No.: 6,221,849 to Sasaki et al. (hereafter "Sasaki") nor Applicant's Admitted Prior Art (hereafter "APA") disclose or suggest all of the inventions recited in amended independent claims 1 and 3. Applicant asserted that neither Sasaki nor APA disclose a liquid crystal driving circuit which has a reference voltage unit separate from the source wire unit as recited in amended claim 1. Applicant also asserted that neither Sasaki nor APA disclose a semiconductor integrated circuit device which has a combination of elements including at least two branch wires and at least two buffers as recited in amended claim 3. It is Applicant's understanding that the Examiner generally agreed with Applicant's assertion. The Examiner advised that further consideration and search would be given to the claims.

I. Introduction

Claims 1-17 are pending in the above application.

Claims 2-8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112 ¶2.

Claims 1-5 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103.

Claims 6-8 stand objected to as containing allowable subject matter but being dependent on a rejected base claim.

Claims 9-14 stand allowed.

Claims 1, 3, 9, 11 and 15 are the independent claims.

II. Information Disclosure Statements

The Office action indicates that certain foreign references cited on the IDS submitted on December 31, 2001 have not been considered because the IDS allegedly fails to comply with 37 CFR 1.98(a)(2). Applicants respectfully traverse. Applicants note that the references cited on the IDS were cited in the international search report ISA/210 of the prior PCT application, and the relevance of each of the references was presented therein. Applicants respectfully note that documents cited in an international search report are to be considered by the USPTO. See, MPEP 609, pg 600-119. Applicants have provided copies of the references which were not considered for the Examiner's convenience. Applicants respectfully request consideration of the documents listed on the IDS.

Applicants also note that an IDS was submitted on May 7, 2003 with copies of references cited. This IDS does not appear to be acknowledged by the Office action. Applicants respectfully request consideration of the documents listed on the IDS. Should the Examiner have difficulty locating the IDS or the references, Applicant will gladly resubmit such documents.

III. Amendments

Claims 1-6 and 8 have been amended to more particularly point out that which Applicant regards as the invention therein. The amendments to claims 2, 3-6 are considered to resolve the concerns under 35 U.S.C. §112 ¶2 identified by the Examiner.

Claims 15-17 are newly added.

No new matter has been added.

IV. Prior Art Rejections

Claims 1, 2, 9, 11 and 13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No.: 5,727,012 to Baillargeon et al. (hereafter “Baillargeon”).

Claim 15 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102 as being anticipated by Arimoto (JP 02-045991).

Claims 3-8, 10, 12, 14 and 15-17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Baillargeon.

It is Applicant’s understanding, based on the interview, that none of the above rejections will be maintained against the above claims, which depend on amended claims 1 and 15 and incorporate all of the limitations thereof. Accordingly, no further response is believed to be necessary at this time.

V. New Claims

New claims 15 and 16 depend on amended claim 1 and are believed to be patentable at least for the same reasons as amended claim 1. New claim 17 depend on amended claim 3 and is believed to be patentable at least for the same reasons as amended claim 3.

VI. Conclusion

Having fully responded to all matters raised in the Office Action, Applicants submit that all claims are in condition for allowance, an indication for which is respectfully solicited. If there are any outstanding issues that might be resolved by an interview or an Examiner's amendment, the Examiner is requested to call Applicants' attorney at the telephone number shown below.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 500417 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,
MCDERMOTT, WILL & EMERY



Lawrence T. Cullen
Registration No. 44,489

600 13th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20005-3096
(202) 756-8000 LTC:MWE
Facsimile: (202) 756-8087
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